

Mission San Jose Y San Miguel De Aguayo, Church  
6539 San Jose Road  
San Antonio  
Bexar County  
Texas

HABS No. TX-333-A

HABS  
TEX  
15-SANT.V,  
SE-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MISSION SAN JOSE Y SAN MIGUEL  
DE AGUAYO, CHURCH

HABS No. TX-333-A

Location: 6539 San Jose Road, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.  
Present Owner: Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio.  
Present Use: Public museum.  
Significance: The church is a typical component of a Spanish mission complex built during the period of Texas frontier.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1768.
2. Original and subsequent owners: See History section of Mission San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo, HABS No. TX-333.
3. Builder: Father Pedro Ramirez de Arellano.
4. Original plans and construction: Before the 1794 partial secularization of the Spanish missions, the church and the chapel were a beautiful feature. Father Jose Francisco Lopez wrote in 1789 that the entire church building and its furnishings were valued at thirty thousand pesos and eight or ten thousand pesos respectively. Ornaments, some of silver, included a frontal, a throne and a baldaquin.

B. Historical Context: See Mission San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo, HABS No. TX-333.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The church is of a large cruciform type with two front towers. A vaulted roof and dome, an ornate frontispiece and buttresses give the church more architectural flavor.
2. Condition of fabric: The walls are sound and the building is currently well maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The church is approximately twenty feet wide and eight feet long. The front facade is approximately forty feet wide.

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2. Foundation: Rubble stone and lime mortar.
3. Walls: Dressed rubble limestone laid in lime mortar, reinforced with stone buttresses having plain weatherings. Exterior corners are of ashlar limestone quoins.
4. Structural system: Load bearing masonry walls, vaulted roof and dome. Present vaults and dome are reconstructions in reinforced concrete dating from this century.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The principal doorway is located in the west facade and is an integral part of the frontispiece. Its profile is a typical shape as found in Mexican churches, being formed by concave quadrants springing from the imposts and joined to the center arc by two inside right angles. The intrados of this "arch" is rebated. Framing the opening are two classical pilasters with molded bases and capitals. These pilasters and the "arch" architrave have ornate raised foliate decoration.

Flanking the pilasters and defining the outer edges of the frontispiece are two niche-pilasters of typical form, reflecting the characteristic rocaille and pijante forms of the period.

A classical molded cornice, broken in the horizontal plane, covered by various raised foliate forms, clearly divides the frontispiece into its upper and lower halves.

The upper half, organized around the elliptical choir window also repeats the rocaille and pijante forms as found below. The composition is terminated with a classical molded cornice.

The double wood doors are later replacements (this century) and are paneled in the "colonial" style.

- b. Windows: There is one window opening at the base of each tower, both alike, with a wide, plain stone architrave and a classical molded label. The windows are not original. There are two splayed openings high in the south wall, with wood casement sash. Four windows are located in the reconstructed octagonal drum of the crossing; they are fixed wood sash.
6. Roof: The present roof, reconstructed in this century, is reinforced concrete and imitates the original vaulting and dome.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: Rectangular five bay nave with towers; no transepts.
2. Flooring: Flagstone, not original.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls and ceilings plastered, whitewashed, with the exception of a red dado and yellow border.
4. Doors: The doorway leading into the chapel has an ornate, molded architrave with raised decoration, and a classical molded cornice, round-arch shaped in the center.

The double wood doors are paneled in the "colonial" style.

5. Trim: None notable.
6. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Heating: None.
  - b. Lighting: Electric hanging fixtures in the "colonial" style.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The church is oriented with its long axis east to west with the principal facade facing west, and is located parallel to and near the north boundary of the old Mission Plaza.

Prepared by: John C. Garner, Jr.  
Director, Bexar County Architecture  
Survey  
1969

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The San Antonio project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in the summer of 1968, and was made possible with funds from HABS and two sponsors, the Bexar County Historical Survey Committee and the San Antonio Conservation Society. Under the direction of James Massey, Chief of HABS, the project was carried out by Wesley I. Shank (Iowa State University), project supervisor, and by student assistant architects, Charles W. Barrow (University of Texas); Les Beilinson (University of Miami); William H. Edwards (University of Illinois); and Larry D. Hermesen (Iowa State University) at the HABS field office in the former Ursuline Academy buildings, San Antonio. John C. Garner, Jr., Director of Bexar County Architecture Survey, did the outside work on the written documentaries. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the written data in 1983, for preparation of transmittal to the Library of Congress. Dewey G. Mears of Austin, Texas took the documentary photographs of the San Antonio structures.

The 1983 photographs of the church are part of the 1983 San Antonio Missions project, which was sponsored by the ~~Southwest~~ Regional office, National Park Service. John Lowe of the HABS/HAER Office, Washington, D.C., took the photographs.

ADDENDUM TO  
MISSION SAN JOSE Y SAN MIGUEL DE AGUAYO, CHURCH  
(San Jose Mission, Church)  
San Antonio Missions National Historical Park  
6539 San Jose Road  
San Antonio  
Bexar County  
Texas

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013 7127

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U.S. Department of the Interior  
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